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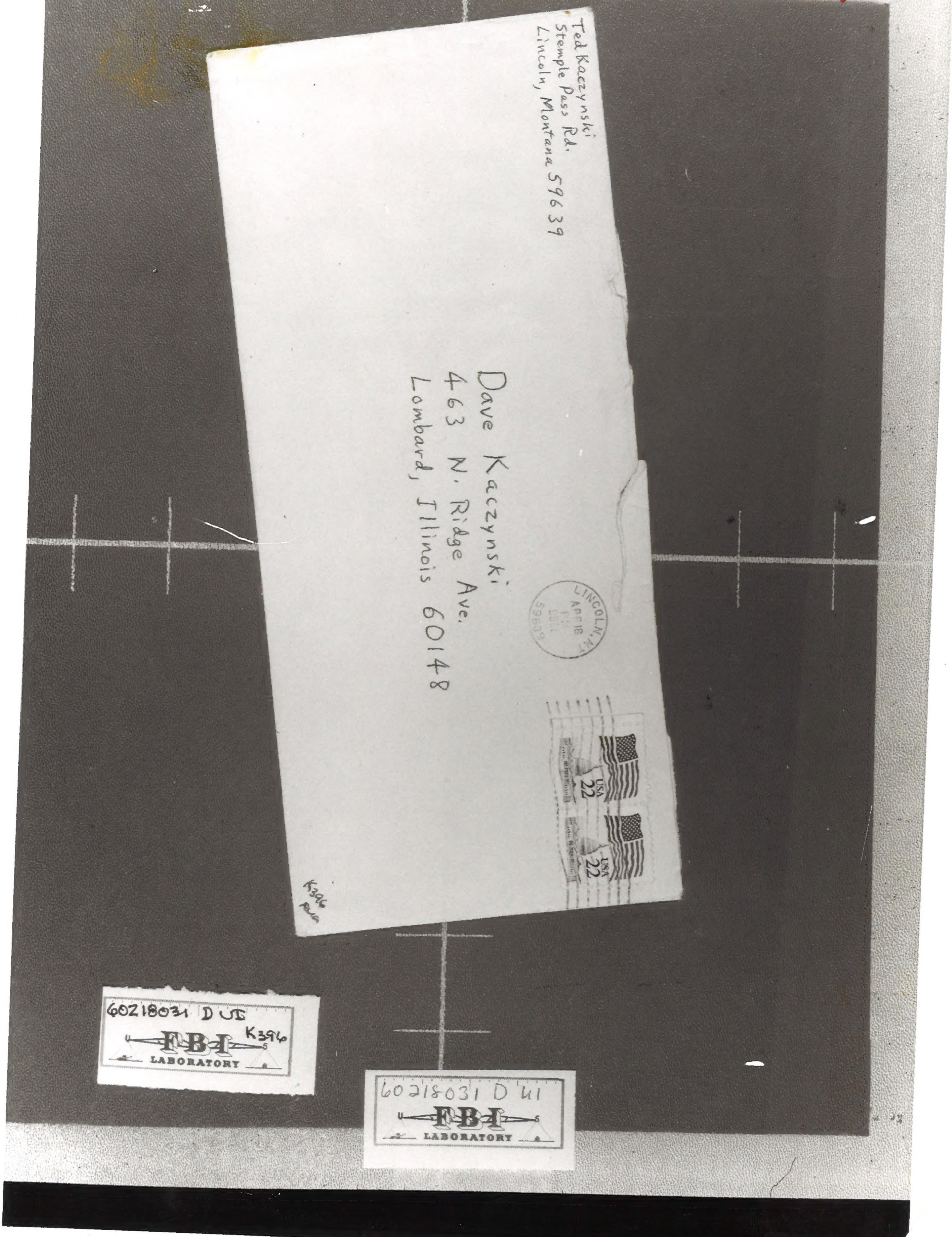
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Dear Dave—

You son of a bitch. Your letter made me so mad that I was on the point of cutting off all communication with you forever. I had a note to that effect written out and put in an envelope and the envelope stamped, addressed, and sealed. And if I had once sent that note I would have stuck to that resolution, too. I got over being mad at you— or partly got over it — just in time.

Clearly you don't realize that every time I bring up that issue and someone says "Oh, it's only cause you were warped by 'that hospital experience'*," all it does is make me more angry. By repeatedly giving that kind of rationalization those old fuck-heads have only increased and increased my resentment against them. And by arguing the same way yourself, you also have increased my resentment ~~[illegible]~~ against them.

In the first place, most of that shit in your letter is based on unfounded speculation that you are unable to support with any evidence. But the real stupidity of your arguments is revealed by simply <u>conceding</u> (for the sake of argument) <u>that everything you said was true</u>. Let's assume that I <u>did</u> have a fund of resentment against our parents as a result of "that hospital experience". It's still obvious that, quite independently of any previous resentments, the treatment I got from them during my teens was quite sufficient to build up any amount of resentment. You don't have to resort to any fancy manipulation of speculative psychoanalytical principles, but only to common

* You didn't use those words, but in effect that's what you were saying.

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experience of the way people behave, to realize that when someone is repeatedly subjected to humiliating insults without being able to retaliate, he will come to hate those who insult him. This by itself is quite sufficient to explain my resentment, and whether I had any previous unconscious resentments (which I don't believe is the case) is beside the point. (Did you ever hear of Occam's (or Ockham's) Razor? It's the principle that when a simple and obvious explanation, and a complex explanation, are both available for the same phenomenon, the simple explanation is the most probable.)

OK, now, let's take your contention that because I was a "gloomy" etc.* kid, the parents had reason to believe I really was "sick". OK, for the sake of argument, let's concede that. Let's even go further and assume I was a real nuthouse case — let's suppose I went around insisting that I was Napoleon Bonaparte. Far from justifying our parents' behavior, that makes it even worse. They certainly knew enough to realize that if someone really is mentally ill, one of the worst things you can do to them is to shout at them in a hostile and accusing manner, "You're sick! You're sick! You have the mind of a two-year-old!" etc., etc. This is a point that I made several times in my letters to our parents on this subject, and you claim to have read at least some of those letters. Yet neither you nor they seem to be able to get this obvious point through your thick skulls. They (and now you) keep citing supposedly "sick" symptoms

*You weren't old enough to remember what I was like before the age of 11 or 12. Before that I was not gloomy or anything of the sort. After that age I had plenty enough reason to be gloomy.

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of mine in order to justify their behavior toward me. The only way to explain this is by assuming that they (and you) are more anxious to justify themselves than they are to get to the heart of the matter. ¶ If you had any *real* understanding of psychology you would realize that every time I try to get the justice of my case recognized, only to be answered by more arguments purporting to show that there is something wrong with me mentally, it only causes me frustration and consequently intensifies my anger.

I'm not going to go through your letter and answer your arguments point by point; for two reasons: One is that whenever I start thinking over that shit I get so angry that I get tempted to cut off communication with you once and for all. The other reason is that any attempt to reason with you would probably be futile. I know from experience in arguing with you that when you have an emotional investment in your point of view, rational argument has no effect on you.

I will however mention this one point: On the basis of no evidence whatever, you hypothesize that in being affectionate toward you when you were a baby, I was "denying" an unconscious hatred for you. Of course, how can one prove or disprove an assertion that one has such-and-such an unconscious urge? All I can say is that, insofar as it is possible to know anything about such matters through honest introspection, I feel sure that my affection for you was unmixed with any resentment (on my side, anyway). (When we were older of course we had conflicts that resulted in resentment, but that resentment was relatively superficial rather than deep and lasting.) A more interesting question is *why* you

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seem to feel — without being able to cite any evidence for it — that I must hate you unconsciously. I recall that a few years ago you said you had feared that I had (as you put it) a hatred for you so great that even I was unable to acknowledge it. Just to show that two can play this psychoanalyzing game, I'll resort to the phenomenon of "projection": Note how you keep attributing to me characteristics that you yourself have:

(1.) You assume that I, like you, have, or had, a major problem with guilt over sex. I was really astonished to find you misjudging me so badly. Of course I'm not free of shame over sex — I don't suppose anybody is in our society — but I never had enough shame over sex to feel that it was a serious problem. Actually, though I knew you were kinda prissy, I was surprized to learn that you had such a problem with sex guilt as you indicate in your letter. I never felt that our parents' attitudes toward sex were particularly repressive, neither explicitly, nor "subtly" as you put it.

(2.) You suppose that I have a strong craving for affection. Your arguments, in my opinion, don't hold water, but I'm not going to go over them in detail. As I said before, how can one ever disprove an assertion that one has such and such an unconscious urge? But your need for affection is obvious and one doesn't need any speculative arguments to prove it. Look how important it is to you to have closeness, loyalty, and affection with your friends. And I was surprized at the extent of your gratitude when I revealed to you, a few years ago, how much I care about you.

(3.) Finally, you tend to attribute to me a repressed

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resentment toward you. Yet you've admitted yourself in the past that you have certain resentments toward me — and I wouldn't be surprized if you had considerably more resentment toward me than you permit yourself ~~yourself~~ to be conscious of — such resentment would be perfectly natural and justifiable considering the way I used to denigrate you and otherwise push you around when I was in my teens. As I've said before, I'm very sorry for it now, and I wouldn't blame you if you hate me.

Actually I don't take this "projection" bullshit very seriously — how much truth there may be to it is merely a matter for speculation. I just wanted to show that two can play this psycho-analysis game. You can "prove" almost anything you want, by selecting, from among the various possible interpretations of the observed phenomena, those interpretations that are convenient for your thesis.

OK, look, I'm still mad at you. I still haven't fully got over it. The only thing that prevented me from sending you that letter cutting off all communication for good was the fact that the night before I was going to send it I had a dream that brought to the surface my real feelings toward you — which are soft and affectionate. Since I'm still mad, don't write to me for awhile. Permission to send me a book for my birthday is rescinded. Later, when I get over being mad — say after a few months — I'll write to you again and then you can resume corresponding with me if you like. But don't ever argue with me about my relations with

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our parents. I have so much accumulated anger against them that whenever anyone tries to argue with me about it, and especially when they attribute my resentment to some kind of a mental aberration, I almost choke. This, moreover, causes me to accumulate more resentment against them, so by trying to argue with me you only defeat your own purpose, which I assume is to encourage reconciliation.

So I flatly refuse to accept any contradiction on this point. No doubt this is unreasonable. But you're just going to have to humor me if you want to get along with me.

—Ted.

In your letter you mentioned in their favor that they took very quietly our respective decisions not to follow respectable careers as they wanted. Ha! You weren't there most of the time during the first couple of years after I quit my assistant professorship. You wouldn't believe how much shit I had to take from the old bitch. To take just one example: One evening I had to sit there and listen to a long and extremely insulting tirade from her in which she accused me of causing her high blood pressure and ended by calling me "a monster! A monster! An ungrateful monster!" I took all that quietly and when she was done I went to Dad who was in the bathroom shaving or something and I asked him "What do you think of that?" All he said was, "Well, I think maybe you are contributing to her high blood pressure." Now if I had said only a fraction of those insults to the

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old bitch, he would have come to me and said "You know, you hurt mother's feelings, I think you should go and apologize, blah blah blah." Similarly, if I seem a little cold toward the old fucker — nothing concrete, just a vague coldness toward him — Ma will come to me and say "I think Dad feels you don't like him*, you should try to be warmer toward him, etc, etc." Yet during my teens Dad could give me not a vague coldness, but the most cutting kind of insults, and did she ever go to him and urge him to treat me differently? Not that I ever knew of! And if she did it certainly didn't have any effect. Of course there's always an excuse for Ma or Dad, "They're tired, they're worried, blah blah blah". Yet I have to take any kind of insults from them and if I show the effects of it, then I'm "sick".

— Walter Teszewski II

"... an almost universal belief to the effect that anyone is competent to discuss psychological problems, whether he has taken the trouble to study the subject or not..." — H. J. Eysenck, Sense and Nonsense in Psychology, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1957, page 13.

"One of the reasons why popular discussions on psychological matters are so uninformed..." — Ibid., p.17

"It should not be thought, however, that the purveyors of nonsense in this field are entirely to be

*Of course I don't like him! Why should I like him?

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found in the ranks of non-psychologists. Alas, many members of the psychological fraternity — and particularly the psychological sorority! — have been equally guilty in this respect." — Ibid., p. 20.

"What most investigators have done in order to find out whether psychoanalysis and other types of psychotherapy are effective ... has been to take a group of seriously ill people, submit them to the particular type of therapy in question, and state at the end of a period of treatment ... how many of the patients have been cured .... Suppose we find that 70 percent of our patients are cured after four years of treatment. This improvement ... might be due to the treatment, but it might also be due to any number of other causes. ... a proper experiment has been recorded ... in which matched groups of neurotic subjects were respectively treated by psychotherapy and not treated at all.... The treated group improved to a considerable extent, but the untreated group improved equally." — Ibid., pp. 68-69.

"The critical reader may feel at this point that while the discussion may have been quite interesting at times, it has not produced a single fact which could be regarded as having scientific validity. Everything is surmise, conjecture .... The blame for this state of affairs must be squarely laid at the door of the analysts, whose efforts have always been directed towards persuasion and propaganda, rather than towards impartial investigation and proof."
— Ibid., p. 170.

"It was found again that some people were very much better than others [at assessing a person's personality intuitively on the basis of a brief period of observation.]

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...Students of the natural sciences are usually superior to other groups in making judgements of this kind. Psychiatrists have been found to be reasonably accurate in predicting verbal behavior, but not in predicting behavior in actual life situations.... Practically the the only relationship between the psychiatrist and his patient is one involving words and verbal behavior....

"Perhaps the superiority of students of the natural sciences over psychiatrists and clinical psychologists is not to be wondered at either. Physicists, chemists, engineers, and so on, are trained to deal with facts and not to indulge in speculation and complex theorizing unsupported by evidence. Psychoanalysts... all too easily take their highly speculative theories seriously, forgetting the very small factual basis supporting them.... It is not known whether this is the correct explanation of the findings, but it certainly is a possible one..." — Ibid., pp. 189-190.

Timothy Leary (who, before he went nuts on LSD was a respectable psychotherapist) said:

"One can postpone the moment of painful discovery but eventually the unhappy truth finally becomes apparent—that... eventually you begin to think maybe, maybe you don't know what you're talking about." — Quoted by Thomas A. Harris in <u>I'm OK —Youre OK</u>, page 14. Harris then continues: "After this rare and revealing admission of doubts that few psychotherapists dare state but many have felt..."

In a letter to the Skeptical Inquirer, Vol. IV, No. 2, Winter 1979-80, (pp. 107-108), Associate Professor Mark B. Fineman of the Dept. of Psychology, Southern

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Connecticut State College, wrote: "... the pseudoscientific gibberish so endemic to modern-day mental-health professionals... We should no more accept uncritically the pronouncements of mental-health adherents..." etc.

I can't quote page numbers on the next one, but a psychoanalyst named Robertiello, in a book titled Your own true love, which I found in the Lombard Library, mentioned studies which had shown that the effectiveness of a method of psychotherapy depended less on the theory used than on the personal relationship of the patient to the therapist — the patient had to have respect for and faith in his therapist. Robertiello, however, did not draw the obvious conclusion: All these different schools of psychoanalysis hold theories which largely contradict each other — thus the theories can't all be right* — at most one or two of them can be right. If one were right, one would expect it to show a decisive superiority to the other theories as a basis for treating psychological problems. Since none of the theories does show such a decisive superiority, it seems likely that none of the theories is right. Insofar as psychotherapy is effective it is evidently a kind of faith cure.

So much for all this bullshit psychoanalysis stuff! (And presumably its validity is even more dubious in the hands of those who are not even thoroughly trained in the theories.)

P.S. Later — when I get over being upset — if you want to discuss our family's old "dirty laundry", that's OK. But just don't argue with my point of view regarding my resentment toward our parents. Unreasonable as it may be, I can't endure contradiction on this point. I just get too angry. — Ted.

*They might all contain some grain of truth — but they can't all be valid as general theories of the human mind.

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